FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020

AJC.com

$2.00

A.M. SHOWERS
High: 69
Low: 61
30% chance of rain

Sat.: Some showers, 68/53
Sun.: Scattered rain, 64/55
Mon.: Scattered rain, 55/48

Complete weather: B10

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Credible. Compelling. Complete.

AJC TOP STORY: CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

CLOSING DOWN

Schools, Legislature halt work over virus fear

LEGISLATURE

Lawmakers suspending '20 session temporarily

By Maya T. Prabhu
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and James Salzer
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Georgia legislative leaders took the unprecedented step Thursday of calling a temporary halt to the 2020 legislative session amid the growing coronavirus pandemic.

For the lawmakers, staffers and lobbyists who live in a politically charged, back-slapping, hand-shaking Capitol bubble three months at the beginning of each year, it was a reality check.

And many of them were relieved after slugging their way through days of lengthy agendas as the pandemic grew.

"We need to just sort of disperse a little bit to let it die down for all of us involved that are captured in this building," said Sen. Ed Harbison, 78, a Columbus Democrat who has been in the Legislature for 27 years. "You have to respect trying to do something rather than sit here and let yourself be

Session continued on **A7**

ALSO INSIDE
» Clock ticking in fight for DeKalb ethics legislation, **B1**
» Toxic gas bills pass in both houses, plus more news, **B8**

Speaker of the House David Ralston huddles with representatives Thursday afternoon at the Georgia State Capitol just before announcing that the Legislature would suspend the session today because of the coronavirus. CONTRIBUTED BY BEN@BENGRAY.COM

EDUCATION

Campuses may be shuttered for weeks

By Maureen Downey, Ty Tagami and Marlon A. Walker

Georgia's public colleges and many of the state's largest school districts announced one after the other Thursday they would be shutting down campuses for a couple weeks or more, and where possible moving online, after the coronavirus claimed its first life here.

They acted after Gov. Brian Kemp held a news conference issuing a call to action to do so if they thought it was necessary.

Kemp said schools in metro Atlanta areas already dealing with confirmed cases of COVID-

Closures continued on **A6**

INFORMATION YOU NEED
We are committed to bringing you the latest on the outbreak. Follow AJC.com/coronavirus for updates, health information and helpful resources to keep you and your family safe.

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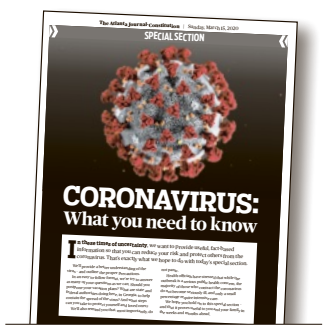
THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

ANOTHER DAY OF LOSSES
The stock market posted its largest one-day loss since 1987, as the outbreak continues to hammer the global economy. The Dow Jones industrial average dropped almost 2,353 points to close at 21,200.47. **A2**

FINAL FOUR CANCELED
The NCAA said its men's and women's basketball tournaments, including the men's Final Four in Atlanta, will be canceled. Professional leagues, such as baseball and soccer, delayed or suspended their seasons. **C1**



SPECIAL SECTION

EIGHT PAGES ON CORONAVIRUS
We want to provide useful, fact-based information so that you can reduce your risk and protect others from the coronavirus. In Sunday's paper, we'll try to answer as many of your questions as we can.

ACROSS THE STATE

Georgia sees first COVID-19 death; events canceled

By Bo Emerson
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The coronavirus crisis in Georgia took a grim turn Thursday with the state's first death, which occurred against a background of school closings, canceled sports events and travel restrictions.

Gov. Brian Kemp's office said the victim was a 67-year-old male who was hospitalized at Wellstar Kennestone. State officials said the man, who tested positive for the COVID-19 illness on March 9, also had "underlying medical conditions."

On the same day the disease took its first Georgia victim, a cascade of public facilities began closing their doors to protect against the spread of the virus. While the governor did not mandate schools be shuttered, one system after another announced closings. Two-week hiatuses were announced by Marietta and Atlanta schools, and Cobb Schools are "closed until

Georgia continued on **A6**

The office of Gov. Brian Kemp confirmed Thursday the man who died had tested positive March 9 and had underlying conditions.

AJC ePaper

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BREAKING NEWS: PAGE A8

U.S. strikes Iran-backed militia

Coalition warplanes target several bases in Iraq used by Shia militias believed responsible for rocket attack.

METRO, B1

Collision with bus kills pregnant mom, 2 kids

Driver loses control, crosses into oncoming traffic before hitting MARTA bus in NW Atlanta.

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